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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION RP-10

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 AID-02 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-15 CIG-02
CIAE-00 EA-12 ICA-15 DODE-00 H-01 10-15 NSC-03
NSAE-00 PH-09 PA-02 SP-02 SPRS-02 129 W
----- 52651 080306Z /63

P 080211Z APR 81
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2799
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS CANBERRA 3440

ROME OF FODAG

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: SREF, PK, AF, AS
SUBJ: INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN REFUGEE RELIEF

REF: STATE 64533

1. THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS ANNOUNCED APRIL 2 THAT THE GOA WAS PROVIDING ADDITIONAL FOOD AID WORTH \$6.2 MILLION (US \$7.3 MILLION) TO ALLEVIATE THE PLIGHT OF THE AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN AND TO EASE THE BURDEN ON PAKISTAN OF PROVIDING TEMPORARY ASYLUM TO 1.6 MILLION DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM AFGHANISTAN. THE MINISTER SAID THAT THE ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION WAS PROMPTED BY THE RAPID INCREASE IN REFUGEES, NOTABLY AN INFLOW OF 143,000 IN JANUARY 1981. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN AT REPORTS THAT THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES COULD GROW TO TWO MILLION BY MID-1981, AND MAY EVEN REACH THREE MILLION.

HE SAID THE MAIN PROBLEM WOULD CONTINUE TO BE FINDING SUFFICIENT FOOD TO FEED THIS LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE.
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2. IN A PRESS RELEASE, THE MINISTER SAID, QUOTE -

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TO RELIEVE HARDSHIP AND SUFFERING AMONGST THE MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS, AUSTRALIA WOULD PROVIDE UNHCR WITH AN IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT OF 100 TONNES OF SKIM MILK POWDER VALUED AT \$120,000. IN ADDITION, AUSTRALIA WOULD PROVIDE 7,500 TONNES OF WHEAT, WORTH \$1.6 MILLION, INCLUDING FREIGHT, TO UNHCR FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE AFGHANISTAN REFUGEES, AND 25,000 TONNES OF WHEAT TO PAKISTAN WORTH \$4.4 MILLION. THE MINISTER ADDED THAT THIS TOTAL OF 32,500 TONNES OF WHEAT WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO UNHCR AND PAKISTAN FOR SHIPMENT IN JULY. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REVIEW THE SITUATION IN MID-1981 TO DETERMINE WHETHER TO MAKE FURTHER ALLOCATIONS OF FOOD GRAIN, NON-GRAIN FOOD OR OTHER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. PART OF AUSTRALIA'S 1980-1981 PLEDGE TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM WILL BE USED TO PURCHASE 800 TONNES OF AUSTRALIAN SUGAR VALUED AT \$500,000 FOR PROJECTS IN PAKISTAN, INCLUDING RELIEF FOR REFUGEES. THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AFGHAN REFUGEE SITUATION NOW TOTALLED ABOUT \$7 MILLION (US\$8.26 MILLION). CURRENTLY, ABOUT 100 TONNES OF HIGH-PROTEIN BISCUITS SUPPLIED BY AUSTRALIA WERE BEING DISTRIBUTED TO SUPPLEMENT FEEDING PROGRAMS IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS. END QUOTE.

3. THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT CONCLUDED, "BY THESE PROMPT DONATIONS, AUSTRALIA IS SEEKING TO SHOW PRACTICAL COMPASSION FOR THE WELFARE OF THOSE INNOCENT PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED TO FLEE FROM INVADING AND OCCUPYING FOREIGN FORCES".
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